

Greens have wide range of choices in race to replace May; Ten candidates are a lot, but they're 'the right 10,' says interim party leader

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Byline: Alex Ballingall Toronto Star

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Body

Don't call it the other leadership campaign in Canadian politics.

Though if you do, Jo-Ann Roberts won't mind.

The interim leader of the Green Party of Canada says she's proud of the slate of 10 candidates who are set to take part - safely distanced by video - in the first official leadership debate, hosted by TVO on Tuesday.

"The important thing has been to make sure that our own members have been able to pay attention," said Roberts when asked about competing for attention with the ongoing Conservative leadership race and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have a variety of backgrounds. We have coast to coast to coast, we have diversity in age, gender," she said. "Ten's a lot. But it's the right 10."

Here's who's running:

Annamie Paul

Paul is a lawyer who has worked at the International Criminal Court and co-founded an organization meant to spur progress on sustainable development. She is perceived by some as an early favourite because of her success at fundraising in the first weeks of the contest. She was also the first candidate to clear the application process-with its \$10,000 entry fee-and officially enter the race. Her platform includes calls to make voting mandatory, bring long-term care under federal health law and create a guaranteed basic income.

Glen Murray

Murray brings the longest political resume to the race, having served as a city councillor and mayor of Winnipeg and as an Ontario Liberal cabinet minister. Murray says he wants to maintain the Green party's general suite of policies, including an aggressive climate-change agenda and a push for a guaranteed basic income. In the next election, his focus would be on winning the party's first 50 seats - a massive jump from the three it currently holds in the House of Commons.

Amita Kuttner

Armed with a PhD in astrophysics, Kuttner - who is gender non-binary and goes by "they" - has already released an extensive policy platform. They want to cut ties to the Commonwealth and create a new parliamentary republic that

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ensures Indigenous representation. Kuttner also wants to "dismantle" police departments to further fund social services, make university tuition-free, decriminalize drug use and sex work, and change the federal carbon price so it doesn't place a burden on low-income Canadians.

David Merner

A former Liberal partisan who jumped ship when the Trudeau government nationalized the Trans Mountain oil pipeline, Merner styles himself as a walking-talking example of how the Greens can grow. Before the pandemic, Merner set out on a cross-country "listening campaign" to gather ideas about the path forward for a party that is seeking its first new leader in more than 13 years.

Meryam Haddad

A lawyer and self-declared socialist, Haddad says she wants the Greens to become the natural political home for Canadian leftists. She recently called for the "abolition of the RCMP" to spend more money on social services like housing and pharmacare. She also wants to reform the Green party to empower regional associations and decentralize power, and cooperate with other progressive parties to push for climate action and social justice.

Andrew West

An Ottawa-based lawyer and self-described political "moderate," West's platform stresses the need for proportional representation, to stop growth in the "tar sands," and to create a guaranteed basic income. He is also emphasizing the need to attract "Blue-Greens" - fiscal conservatives who care about the environment. He is endorsing the 2019 Green call to balance the budget in five years, although he acknowledges the target must be adjusted because of COVID-19.

Dimitri Lascaris

Lascaris calls himself an "eco-socialist" and once worked as a lawyer on Wall Street for major banks and corporations. More recently, he has worked as a correspondent for the Real News Network, and was behind a Green motion calling for a boycott of Israel that prompted May to threaten her resignation in 2017. Before entering the race, he said he wants a 75 per cent income tax for earnings over \$500,000 and a 100 per cent tax on wealth over \$500 million so there are no more billionaires in Canada.

Dylan Perceval-Maxwell

Perceval-Maxwell boasts 35 years of involvement with Canada's Greens. His campaign CV highlights a long history of eco-innovation: he built a car that ran on vegetable oil, helped Montreal develop bio-diesel for buses, and sold carbon-negative cooking stoves in Asia. Like many other candidates, Perceval-Maxwell is basing his platform on input from members. So far, he is calling for online voting in Canada and the elimination of income tax for low earners, among other things.

Judy Green

A life coach and computer scientist from Nova Scotia who used to work as an airframe technician for the Canadian Armed Forces, Green has said she is running because she wants to strengthen the Green party as a "grassroots" political movement. Earlier this year, Green told the Star she supports a guaranteed basic income and wants Canada to start emphasizing measures of personal wellness over economic indicators like gross domestic product.

Courtney Howard

Howard is an emergency room doctor in Yellowknife who argues the climate crisis is not just a threat to the planet, but a threat to human health. As president of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Howard has highlighted the dangers of "eco-anxiety" for young people and endorsed federal plans to create a national carbon tax.

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